



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Bernhard H. Berntsen papers

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Bernhard H. Berntsen papers
Identifier:	AAA.bernbern
Date:	1931-1987
Creator:	Berntsen, Bernhard H. (Bernhard Hilmar), 1900-1992
Extent:	0.4 Linear feet ((60 items partially microfilmed on 1 reel))
Language:	Many newspaper clippings in the scrapbook are in Norwegian.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Material on reel 2787 transferred from the National Collection of Fine Arts, who received it from Berntsen, 1975. Unmicrofilmed material donated 1993 and 2002 by Berntsen's great-grandson, Cliff Miller.

Available Formats

35mm microfilm reel 2787 available at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center. Microfilmed materials must be consulted on microfilm. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Biographical / Historical

Painter, mural painter, ironworker; Chicago, Ill., New York, N.Y. and Va. Born in Oslo, Norway. Berntsen also was the model for the laborer who stands behind Lenin in the controversial Diego Rivera mural for Radio City Music Hall.

Scope and Contents

Sketches, photographs, notes, a scrapbook, and printed material.

Scope and Contents

REEL 2787: A notebook containing sketches and notes on the completion of the Willard Parker Hospital mural, New York City, which Sakari Suzuki painted with the assistance of Berntsen for the Federal Arts

Project in 1936-1938; and 9 photographs of the Willard Parker mural, 2 of which show Suzuki and 2 of Suzuki and Berntsen at work. The Willard Parker Hospital was later demolished.

Scope and Contents

UNMICROFILMED: A chronology of Berntsen's career; 24 sketches in pencil and in pen and ink of ironworkers and construction workers, ca. 1933-1934, and of visitors to the National Gallery where Berntsen was a guard, ca. 1966-1971; three letters from Bernsten to his wife Alma, 1947-1952; loose newspaper clippings, ca. 1933-1985, and a scrapbook of newspaper clippings (in Norwegian and English) concerning Berntsen's involvement with the Norwegian Art and Craft Club, and his paintings and sketches of workers at construction sites where he worked as an ironworker, ca. 1931-1976; two exhibition announcements, 1964 and 1986; photographs, ca. 1933-1987, mostly snapshots, include Berntsen painting, Bernsten in his National Gallery of Art guard uniform with Chief Justice Earl Warren, one of students and faculty of the Art Students League (ca. 1933-1934), one of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in New York, several of Berntsen and Suzuki at work on the Willard Parker Hospital mural, ca. 1938, of events sponsored by the Norwegian Art and Craft Club, and of works of art. Also included are photocopies of works of art.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Art museum attendance -- Pictorial works
- Mural painting and decoration, American
- Norwegian American artists

Names:

- Art Students League (New York, N.Y.) -- Faculty -- Photographs
- Art Students League (New York, N.Y.) -- Students -- Photographs
- Federal Art Project (New York, N.Y.)
- Kahlo, Frida -- Photographs
- Norwegian Art and Craft Club (Brooklyn, N.Y.)
- Rivera, Diego, 1886-1957 -- Photographs
- Suzuki, Sakari, 1900- -- Photographs
- United States. Works Progress Administration
- Willard Parker Hospital (New York, N.Y.)

Occupations:

- Muralists -- New York (State) -- New York